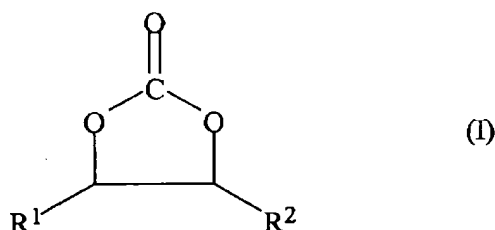


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(b) providing a cosmetic or pharmaceutical composition comprising an emulsion having an oil phase and an aqueous phase, the emulsion comprising a cyclic carbonate of the general formula (I):



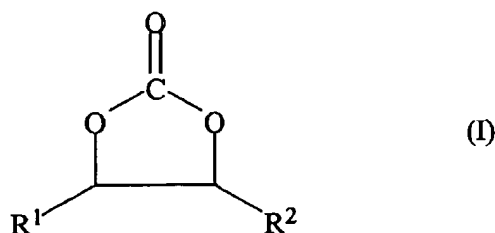
wherein R^1 and R^3 each independently represent hydrogen or a linear or branched alkyl group having from 1 to 4 carbon atoms, and R^2 represents a linear or branched alkyl group having from 1 to 4 carbon atoms or $-CH_2OR^3$; and

(c) contacting the substrate with the cosmetic composition.--

--17. (New) A method of enhancing the moisturizing properties of a cosmetic and/or pharmaceutical preparation, said method comprising:

(a) providing an aqueous composition comprising at least one cosmetic or pharmaceutical active substance;

(b) providing a cyclic carbonate of the general formula (I):



wherein R^1 and R^3 each independently represent hydrogen or a linear or branched alkyl group having from 1 to 4 carbon atoms, and R^2 represents a linear or branched alkyl group having from 1 to 4 carbon atoms or $-CH_2OR^3$; and

(c) combining the composition and the cyclic carbonate.--